

Ghana, Land Of Kente Cloth And Leaders



Castle, a permanent trading base, was built in 1482 and served as a slave castle/fort as human trade became popular. Cape Coast, another

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A Journey Home

With Paula Newsome



Ancient Ghana was developed somewhere between 332 B.C. and the birth of Christ. The land mass of this great civilization was much more extensive than Ghana as we know it today. It was strategically located between the salt deposits of the Sahara and present day Ghana.

By the 11th century, ancient Ghana's greatest leader, Tenkamenin, led a 200,000-person army and

subdued the Muslims from Morocco and Mauretania. These ancient peoples were basically agricultural but trading was also a vital part of their economy. Kumbi Saleh, the capital of ancient Ghana, was a major commercial center for the latest developments in science and culture. This civilization forged its economy by taxing gold and salt merchants.

The first European contact came in 1470 when a party of Portugese landed along the Ghanaian coast. Elmina

Integration Now Leads To Black Institutions

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They find a certain identity here."

That mood is being echoed across the nation as blacks choose to live, attend school and socialize with other blacks, sometimes even in separate proms or reunions.

Prince George's County in Maryland is among several flourishing middle-class black suburbs. Detroit, Chicago and Baltimore and other cities have Afro-centric schools, emphasizing African themes. And campuses such as Howard University in Washington, D.C., attract black students who have rejected integrated lifestyles.

For decades, blacks had their own clubs and fraternities out of necessity. But what's different now is that blacks are losing faith whites will support or accept them on their own terms, said Elijah Anderson, a sociology professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

"It's the acknowledgement that we live in two separate societies and that there is something to be gained by something being separate," Anderson said.

"Some black people are giving up on the American dream of inclusion and assimilation," he said. "A central assumption is that racism is a permanent feature of American society, and one way to deal with it is to avoid it."

No longer is proximity to white America the ultimate measure of success.

"I don't feel I have some higher calling to force myself to integrate myself in a white middle-class community," said Frederick Hutchinson, a state tax analyst and school board member in Prince George's County, one of the nation's largest suburban black counties.

Beyond comfort, blacks say there's another reason to unite - and that's survival.

One Los Angeles-area group, Recycling Black Dollars, provides signs to stores to indicate they are black-owned. It also plans to distribute more than 50,000 free discount cards to encourage blacks to patronize black businesses.

"It's not separatism," Muhammad Nassardeen, the group's president, said of his buy-black plan.

A memorial to human rights leader W.E.B. DuBois adjoins his home in Ghana. DuBois, one of the leading activists for African and African American rights in the 20th century, spent his final years in Ghana before his death in 1963.

PHOTO/PAULA NEWSOME

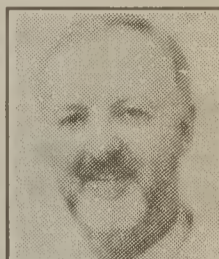
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